6. India has bilateral arrangements with China and Nepal on combating wildlife crime.

In addition, the State Government has also taken the following measures to prdtect wild animals and prevent poaching of rhino:

1. Intensive patrolling in sensitive areas and filling up of vacant posts.
2. Coordination with other law enforcement agencies.
3. Provision for arms & ammunition, and communication facilities.
4. Conducting nature awareness campaigns for the public.
5. Soliciting cooperation from the local communities for conservation.
6. Constitution of Expert Committee for rhino conservation.

(c) As reported by the State Government, 169 families continue to occupy part of the Sixth addition area of Kaziranga National Park. The eviction is pending because of an order of the Hon'ble Guwahati High Court on the notification of the Sixth addition area.

(d) No, Sir. There is no such report.

(e) There is no such proposal by the Central Government.

Tiger population

1451. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent official census shows only about 1400 tigers are left in India;

(b) whether this represents a sharp drop over the last decade which was being predicted and feared by wildlife experts although consistently denied by Government; and

(c) the steps Government and State Governments would take to ensure that the tiger population is stabilized and safeguarded so that it can increase in due course?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) As per the findings of the recent all India Estimation of tiger using refined methodology, the total country-level population of tiger is 1411 (mid value); the lower and upper limits being 1165 and 1657 respectively. The details are given in Statement-I (*See* below).

(b) The recent assessment of tiger population is based on determining spatial occupancy of tigeis throughout potential tiger forests and sampling such forests using camera traps in **a** statistical framework. This assessment is not comparable to the earlier total count using pugmarks owing to several shortcomings in the latter. The new findings indicate a poor status of tiger population in areas outside tiger reserves and protected areas. The tiger population, by and large, in tiger reserves and protected areas of such States are viable, while requiring ongoing conservation efforts.

(c) The steps taken by the Government to protect wild animals including tiger are in Statement-II.

Statement-! *Forest occupancy and population estimates of tiger as, per the refined methodology*

State	Tiger km^2	Tiger Numbers		
		No.	Lower limit	Upper limit
Shivalik-Gangetic Plain Landscape Complex				
Uttarakhand	1901	178	**161**	195
Uttar **Pradesh**	2766	109	**91**	127
Bihar	510	**10**	7	13
Shivalik-Gengetic	5177	297	259	335
Central Indian Landscape Complex and Eastern Ghats			Landscape Complex	
Andhra Pradesh	14126	**95**	84	107
Chattisgarh	3609	26	23	28
Madhya Pradesh	15614	300	236	364
Maharashtra	4273	103	76	131
Orissa	9144	45	37	53
Rajasthan	356	32	30	35
Jharkhand**	1488		Not Assessed	
Central Indian	48610	601	486	718
Western Ghats Landscape Complex				
Karnataka	18715	290	241	339
Kerala	6168	46	39	53
Tamil Nadu	9211 ■	76	56	95
Western Ghats	34094	412	336	487
North East Hills and Brahmaputra Flood Plains				
Assam*	1164	70	60	80
Arunachal Pradesh*	1685	**14**	12	18
Mizoram*	785	6	4	8
Northern West Bengal*	596	10	8	12
North East Hills, and Brahmaputra	**4230**	**100**	**84**	**118**
Sunderbans	1586		Not Assessed	
TOTAL TIGER POPULATION		**1411**	**1165**	1657

* Population estimates are based on possible density of tiger occupied landscape in the ares, not assessed by double sampling.

'* Data was not amenable to population estimation of tiger. However, available information about die landscape indicates low densities of tiger in the area ranging from 0.S to 1.5 per 100 km^1.

Statement-II

The steps taken by the Government to protect wild animals including tiger:

Legal steps

1. Amendment of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for providing enabling provisions for constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau. The punishment in cases of offence within a tiger reserve has been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that has been used for committing any wild life offence.

Administrative steps

2. Strengthening of antipoaching activities, including special strategy for monsoon patrolling, by providing funding support to Tiger Reserve States, as proposed by them, for deployment of antipoaching squads involving ex-army personnel/home guards, apart from workforce comprising of local people, in addition to strengthening of communication/wireless facilities.

3. 100% Central Assistance provided to 17 Tiger Reserves as an additionality for deployment of Tiger Protection Force, comprising of ex-army personnel and local workforce.

4. Constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority with effect from 4.09.2006, for strengthening tiger conservation by, *inter alia,* ensuring normative standards in tiger reserve management, preparation of reserve specific tiger conservation plan, laying down annual/audit report before Parliament, constituting State level Steering Committees under the Chairmanship of Chief Ministers and establishment of Tiger Conservation Foundation.

5. Constitution of a multidisciplinary Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) with effect from 6.6.2007 comprising of officers from Police, Forest, Customs and other enforcement agencies to effectively control illegal trade in wildlife.

6. Approval accorded for declaring eight new Tiger Reserves.

7. The revised Project Tiger guidelines have been issued to States for strengthening tiger conservation, which apart from ongoing activities, *inter alia,* include funding support to States for enhanced village relocation/rehabilitation package for people living in core or critical tiger habitats (from Rs. 1 lakh/family to Rs. 10 lakhs/ family rehabilitation/resettlement of communities involved in traditional hunting and mainstreaming livelihood and wildlife concerns in forests outside tiger reserves and fostering corridor conservation through restorative strategy to arrest habitat fragmentation.

8. A scientific methodology for estimating tiger (including copredators, prey animals and assessment of habitat status) has been evolved and mainstreamed. The findings of this estimation/assessment are bench marks for future tiger conservation strategy.

9. Around 31111 sq. km. of critical/core tiger habitat identified in 17 States.

10. Memorandum of Understanding developed for better/concerted implementation of conservation inputs through tiger reserve States.

Financial steps

11. Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz.* Project Tiger and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

International Cooperation

12. India has a Memorandum of Understanding with Nepal on controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife and conservation, apart from a protocol on tiger conservation with China.

13. A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

14. During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at The Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, with directions to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted as a decision with minor amendments. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming, and eliminate stockpiles of Asian big cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.

Forest cover

1452. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total cover of forests in the country, State-wise as in 2007;

(b) the present level of forest covers as compared to 25 years back in the country, State-wise;

(c) whether the present level of forest cover affects the environment of the country thereby creating severe climatic changes; and

(d) if so, action plan under the serious consideration of the Government to improve the forest covers across the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) The Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, makes an assessment of forest cover in the country on biennial basis. The earliest forest